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REV. E. J. HILL.

AGNES CHASE.

(With portrait.)

ELLSWORTH JEROME HILL was born at Le Roy, New York, December 1, 1833, the son of a farmer of colonial stock from Connecticut. His alert mind and eagerness for knowledge made the most of the local facilities for education, while a love of natural history and of reading led to the study of geological works and of the classics. At 19, when about prepared to enter college, he was seized with an affection of the knee, causing lameness. He never afterward had good health, all that he accomplished being in spite of the handicap of pain and weakness. It was during this first period of lameness that he began the study of botany. His first effort to walk out of doors on crutches was made to secure from the orchard a few early spring flowers which he identified by Wood's Botany. During the summer he thus collected and studied some two hundred specimens that are still preserved in his herbarium. The following year he went to Mississippi, and there taught in a female seminary at Grenada and later in a preparatory school for boys. After three years, much improved in health, he returned to New York where he taught for two years. In 1860 he entered Union Theological Seminary, graduating in the class of 1863. He then married and went to Homewood (near Chicago), Illinois, as pastor of the Presbyterian Church. In 1869 hip disease developed rendering him lame for several years. In consequence he resumed teaching, first in the high school of Kankakee, Illinois, for four years, then in the Englewood high school, Chicago, for eighteen years.

He made rich collections in the sand barrens and swamps about Kankakee, discovering *Sphaeralcea remota,* still known only from the island in the Kankakee River where he found it. Most of these collections were made while he walked on crutches or with two canes. He told me that he carried his vasculum over his shoulder and a camp stool with his crutch or cane in one hand. To secure a plant he would drop the camp stool, which opened of itself, then he would lower himself to the stool and dig the plant. He recovered from his lameness but often suffered acute pain from cold or wet or overexertion. But this did not deter him from making botanical trips that would have taxed a more robust man — in the dunes I have seen him tire out more than one able-bodied man. While teaching in Chicago he spent many of his vacations on extended trips, visiting the Saguenay region in Quebec, the Menominee iron region in upper Michigan, and other places about Lake Superior, and in northern Wisconsin.

Mr. Hill made a critical study of several difficult genera, particularly Potamogeton, Carex, Quercus, Prunus, Salix and Crataegus. The last ten or twelve years were mostly devoted to the study of mosses. Unfortunately his modesty often prevented his publishing his conclusions. His note-books, filled with detailed observations and comparisons, contain full descriptions of several species written long before they were published by others. His bibliography, of 162 titles, shows the range of his botanical interest. He was a correspondent of Dr. Gray and Dr. Watson, contributed specimens and critical notes to Dr. Morong for his work on Potamogeton, and made extensive field studies of Crataegus for Prof. Sargent. It was characteristic of him to give unsparingly of his knowledge to further the work of others, great or small, from critical notes for Prof. Sargent to helping me with a puzzling Carex or elucidating the German-tinged Latin of some of Kunth's descriptions of grasses. He amassed an herbarium of some 16,000 sheets, much the greater part being his own collections, and an exceptionally fine botanical library.

The study of geology he carried on simultaneously with that of botany and the relation of the two he impressed on his students. Before the word ecology was invented he was calling our attention to the zones of vegetation about the sloughs in the dune region of northern Indiana and pointing out to us the successive stages by which vegetation converted the sloughs into dry land. He possessed the vision of plant life as a whole, seeing it as an active factor in building and shaping the surface of the earth.

In 1888, because of poor health and failing eyesight, he gave up teaching, but became the more devoted to botany. In the '90's his health improved and for several years from early spring till late fall he made from one to three or four excursions a week in the Chicago region, studying oaks and Crataegus particularly. It was my good fortune to accompany him on many of these excursions, serving, he used to say, as eyes for him. Many species hitherto unknown for the region were discovered in these days and his joy over them was no less than mine. His enthusiasm and his love of beauty were as fresh as a boy's, while his mature judgment and ripe knowledge made it a rare privilege to be in his company. He never lost his early love of the Greek and Latin classics and often he had a copy of Virgil in his pocket to read aloud during the resting periods.

The last ten or twelve years Mr. Hill devoted to the study of the mosses of the Chicago region. He left in manuscript detailed descriptions of 133 species. He put the manuscript into my hands and after it has been copied it is to be hoped the work may be published. His herbarium has been purchased by the University of Illinois.

Mr. Hill died January 22 at his home in Chicago. The last two years he was feeble physically but mentally as keen and alert as ever. He arose every day until the last, sitting in the room that had so long been his study, library and herbarium.

Three species of plants bear his name, Potamogeton Hillii, Crataegus Hillii and Carduus Hillii.

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